THE VETERAN

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Fight Carter's Unemployment Offensive- JAN.21

MARCH ON WASHINGTON

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Who's To Blame?

LAYOFFS, IMPORTS & LIES

Over the ten-year history of VVAW one of the most important lessons we've learned is that the rich owning class likes to have public opinion on their side before they wage war--they don't have to have it, but it makes wars a whole lot easier for them since they have no intention of fighting the wars themselves. In the beginning, the Vietnam War, if not a popular war, was at least not unpopular. Few opposed it. But as the war escalated the U.S. government couldn't hide its unjust nature and their criminal participation. Millions of people in this country and around the world stepped forward in one way or another, opposing the war. This opposition contributed significantly to ending it.

Since the war ended, times have gotten harder--what with the dollar worth hardly anything and headlines announcing plant shutdowns and thousands thrown on the streets to hunt for jobs that don't exist. From the other side of their mouths, the "makers of public opinion" go on and on about how the economy has stabilized and how things are "recovering." As with the Vietnam War, these guys will lie to us and turn reality on its head; they'll say anything to hide the nature of their rotten system.

In the last couple of months there have been massive layoffs in the steel and electrical industries. These layoffs are the most publicized but are only the sharpest examples of what's happening in the economy overall. "US STEEL Eyes Southworks Closing," "1000 Laid Off at Five Area Plants," "Bethlehem Steel Layoff--7000 at NY, Penn Mills," "Zenith Slashes U.S. Production--Chicago Plants to Close." These headlines in boldface type. In slightly smaller type we read: "Management Blames Imports," "Union Officials Call for Tariff." In the body of the articles themselves (in small type) we can read that company profits

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VETERANS'NOTES

Loans,Work-Study,Eligibility NEW GI BILL

After months of discussion and dissension, Congress finally agreed on a set of amendments to the GI Bill, and Carter signed them into law in late November. As usual, the Veterans Administration will do as little as possible to publicize provisions of the new bill. As a result, Congressmen can go home to their districts and talk about how they have helped the vet, and still have a whole collection of new rules that will cost the VA little since millions of affected veterans won't ever know what's in the new bill.

One provision of the new GI Bill (that is, the old Bill plus the new amendments) vets should already know about--the increase in payments. Senate and House agreed on a 6.6% increase which they're calling a cost of living increase. For a single veteran that means instead of receiving $292 per month, the payments have gone up to $311 per month. The GI Bill check that should have come on the 1st of December (the check to cover the month of November) should have the increase on it as well as the increased amount for October ($292 + $19 (the raise for November) + $19 (the raise for October) = $330 for a single vet). (There was also a cost-of-living increase of 6.6% for disability payments--that increase, not a part of the GI Bill, was passed in October.) If your check doesn't show the increase, raise hell with the nearest VA representative; since all these increases are taken care of by the VA's computer system, there is no excuse at all for the increases not being included in December's check.

Before rushing out to give thanks to your nearest Congressman, however, notice the following statistic from the U.S. Labor Department: the average worker in the U.S. got a $15 per week pay increase in the past year; all of it was eaten up by inflation. So much for our $19 per month!

Another provision of the new Bill deals with work-study programs. These programs provide hundreds of thousands of vets with the ability to make a little money to augment the inadequate GI Bill since the jobs are designed for veterans, and since working hours can be adjusted around school schedules. Although there is a wide range of jobs involved, what they amount to is that the VA can buy cheap labor to do work which otherwise would require fulltime workers (at more or less decent salaries). In the new GI Bill the hourly work-study allowance is raised to equal the federal minimum wage. Just think--all the way up to $2.65 an hour (as of January 1, 1978)! If we did $2.65 worth of work per hour, we'd hardly get our coats off by the end of an 8-hour day. And by 1980, we'll be all the way up to over $3 per hour!

Third, there are new VA educational loan regulations. The amount of the possible loan is increased from $1500 per school year (9 months) to $2500; in fact, what the VA does now, and will continue to do in the future, is calculate what they think the veterans applying for a loan need based on the individual's loan application. The change in the amount of the total possible loan does not mean that vets will automatically get that much, only that the limit has been raised. Another provision of this section is that

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Standing Up For Oppression

MERCENARIES

American boys exchanging the easy life of home for the mud of Africa; getting by on a measly $500 a month, sacrificing their lives to defend the last strongholds of white civilization against the bloodthirsty Black hordes.

Sounds like the midnight Foreign Legion movie? Well, it's exactly the kind of crap the press has been putting out about American mercenaries who have found themselves a home in the Rhodesian army.

What kind of "Mom's apple pie" are these guys really defending? In Rhodesia and South Africa a minority of whites control the government. The Black majority is kept as virtual slaves at the point of a gun. Even the U.S. government has been forced by public outrage to pretend to cutoff arms shipments to these countries. The Black majority works under slave labor conditions to produce the gold, diamonds etc which the rich class of Southern Africa and the U.S. grow fat off. The constant struggle against Vorster in South Africa and Smith in Rhodesia has been met with bullets, imprisonment and torture. A powerful liberation movement has grown up and is now engaging in guerilla warfare against the Rhodesian army.

The Rhodesian ruling class sitting on a powder keg is scrambling to strengthen its military in any way possible. A number of technically skilled foreign mercenaries have thus been accepted into the armed services. The U.S. with $3 billion worth of investments in Southern Africa has gone along with this by allowing the "volunteers" to keep U.S. passports and putting out various forms of propaganda (CBS Special Reports, newspaper and magazine articles) to sanitize the mercenaries' image.

The democracy and freedom these soldiers of fortune are defending is the democracy of the white ruling class to decide how it wants to spend its profits and the freedom to continue to ride on the backs of the Black majority. They enforce their rule by the same systematic terror and brutal repression we became familiar with in Vietnam.

Ex green-beret mercenary back from Rhodesia with fiancee. His legs were blown off by a guerilla land mine. TOO BAD HE WASN'T STANDING ON HIS HEAD!

In fulfilling their role as butchers the American volunteers show their true colors. In papers across the country at the beginning of December an article appeared exposing the efforts of one Major Mike Williams--an American--on a typical patrol with the Rhodesian army. A few highlights:

*Tie a wire around a Black politician's genitals and force his daughter to pull the wire in an effort to make him suck in water being poured over his head.

*Pull down the underwear of the politician's wife and tie her to a bed whose metal springs had been heated over a fire.

Yes, these are the same old stars and stripes boys who brought us the massacre at My Lai. Like My Lai, it wasn't just one Lieutenant Calley--or one Major Williams--who was responsible, but a systematic policy of murder and torture carried out by the capitalist class.

Many of the Americans fighting in Rhodesia will openly lay out their reactionary outlook. Says one ex-Marine, "This is the only country in the world willing to stand up and talk honestly about race relations (apartheid--ed) and willing to fight for what I believe in (slavery & the open facist rule of the rich--ed)."

One Rhodesian veteran recently returned home to the U.S. after both his legs were blown off by a guerilla mine. He is "without bitterness" according to news reports. He also learned nothing. In a press conference arranged by the American Security Council, a group of right-wing fanatics studded with ex-admirals and ex-generals, Keith Nelson is quoted as saying, "Rhodesia is the front line against Communism." If this sounds familiar, remember the

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SUPPORT GROWS IN US

RACIST CRIMES SPARK STRUGGLE

South African students display their anger after their Catholic services are disrupted by police.

New outbursts of rebellion exploded in South Africa on October 20th in the wake of the latest moves by the racist regime of Prime Minister Jon Vorster to crush Black resistance to apartheid and white minority rule. On November 10, police arrested 626 Blacks including 198 schoolchildren in a house-to-house sweep near Pretoria. At the inquest into the murder of Black leader Steve Biko, the police were found "innocent" of any wrongdoing. After watching this farce, angry demonstrators protested in front of the courthouse, taking their lives in their hands. A few days later Biko's family was arrested for distributing literature, the same charge he had been imprisoned on. As of the 11th of November there were more than 300,000 Black students boycotting classes in protest.

Meanwhile, Vorster's strongest backer, the racist ruler of neighboring Rhodesia, Ian Smith, was sending his fighter planes across the border into Mozambique, leveling many villages (which Rhodesia called "guerilla strongholds") and killing hundreds of women and children ("terrorists").

Throughout the world, people hurled new condemnations at the outlaw South African dictatorship. These newest outrages, coming on top of the continuing rule of brutality and terror that keeps the Black majority in bondage have made things quite uncomfortable for even the staunchest backers of these regimes.

In an effort to maintain a position of influence and its image as a "human rights" advocate, the U.S. has attempted to appear as mediator in Africa and head off any really severe action against the Vorster government. So Carter was forced to take action. The U.S. ambassador was called home for "consultation" and UN Ambassador Andrew Young began to circulate a U.S. position paper around the UN calling for "limited sanctions" against South Africa.

Although the UN Security Council voted a resolution ordering all UN members to stop supplying military equipment to South Africa, the action will have little effect. This arms embargo is a joke. There has been a UN arms embargo against South Africa for years and it has never stopped the U.S. or Western European imperialists from building up the South African military machine, used solely for the repression of the Black majority with occasionally sallies into hot spots like Angola. The U.S. claims it has observed the embargo, but next to Britain and France, it is the largest arms merchant in South Africa. It's done by the simple device of licensing foreign firms to produce U.S. arms for shipment to South Africa.

For example, Ford licensed a major Italian arms manufacturer, Oto Melara, to produce the M113A1 armored personnel carrier for South Africa. Four hundred have already been delivered. The South African regime has M-47 Patton tanks, M-41 Walker Bulldog tanks, Lockheed F104G fighter-bombers, F-51D Cavalier counter-insurgency strike aircraft, and Augusta-Bell Iroquois helicopters--all of these U.S. weapons.

The Carter administration moves to "enforce" UN sanctions against South Africa, like previous "compliance" with the arms embargo, are bald-faced lies. All their anguished cries and denunciations of Vorster and Smith are nothing more than attempts to cover the embarrassment they've suffered in this filthy campaign to prop up the racists in Southern Africa.

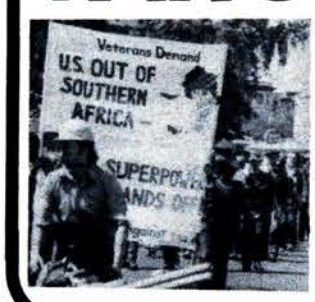
The problem facing Carter and Company is that while they are here in the U.S. talking about "human rights" and trying to present themselves as the force for change in Southern Africa, their junior partners in South Africa are in an ever-tightening circle; to maintain their rule they have to resort to open repression of all opposition, but each act of repression only brings forth new waves of struggle by hundreds of thousands of Black South Africans in the fight to overthrow minority rule. Each new desparate act of repression only helps to dig their own grave deeper and exposes them more in the eyes of the world. The latest wave of repression shows just how weak the Pretoria regime has become under the thunderous blows of the masses of Black people, so weak that it cannot abide even the mildest internal criticism of its rule.

The role of the U.S., both the government and big business, is also being increasingly exposed. On December 3rd, in Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago, and cities across the South, people marched to demand an end to U.S. involvement in Southern Africa and specifically an end to sales of the Krugerrand. This gold coin, sold across the U.S., represents the sweat and blood of thousands of Black miners in South Africa and is one of the economic props of the racist Vorster government. Marchers celebrated major victories in several cities where stores and banks have been forced to stop sales of the Krugerrand and radio and TV stations have stopped advertising the coin, all under mounting popular pressure.

Organized by the New African Liberation Support Committees, the December 3rd demonstrations were joined by a number of different groups including VVAW. These coast-to-coast demonstrations were one more step in the campaign to support the freedom fighters of Southern Africa, saying "VICTORY TO THE PEOPLES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA" ■

VICTORY TO THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN PEOPLE

FATIGUES FOR FREEDOM FIGHTERS



VVAW as part of the building for African Liberation Day will be collecting uniforms (jungle fatigues & boots and web gear) for a company of freedom fighters. As GIs we wore fatigues to crush the people's struggles in places like Vietnam. NOW, THEY WILL BE WORN BY PEOPLE FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM!

DOWN WITH WHITE MINORITY RULE!

VICTORY TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA!

GIs BEAT BACK NAVY

Today more and more effort is being expended by the rich and their cronies to bury remnants of the Vietnam war, to try to make people forget the blood and destruction of their wars, and to try to hide the struggles of GIs who openly revolted against them. They try to pass off military life as a job, an education, and a chance to travel, trying to attract more cannon-fodder into their military. The U.S.rulers desperately need to beef up their armies to protect their business interest in other countries particularly under increased pressure from the other superpower, the Soviet Union. These scum will take anyone who is warm and can bleed so they can trade lives for pockets lined with dollars.

Billboards, magazines and TV show the grandeur of "action army," an "adventure navy" plus added attractions of veterans benefits. Once you sign the dotted line, however, the real military life begins. An action army really means to be stationed on field manuevers and trying to avoid getting your legs mauled by the tracks of a tank. Floating deathtraps and unsafe working conditions are an adventure, if you survive them, while doing time in the Navy. If you can get out of Marine bootcamp without getting beat to death with pugil sticks or lighted by your DI, you'll live to see your buddies die or get maimed, and realize why the Marines are always looking for a few good men. The Air Force offers you a chance to be part of a crew that can launch cruise missiles, napalm women and children, and deliver nuclear bombs provided your B-52 doesn't die of old age in mid-flight.

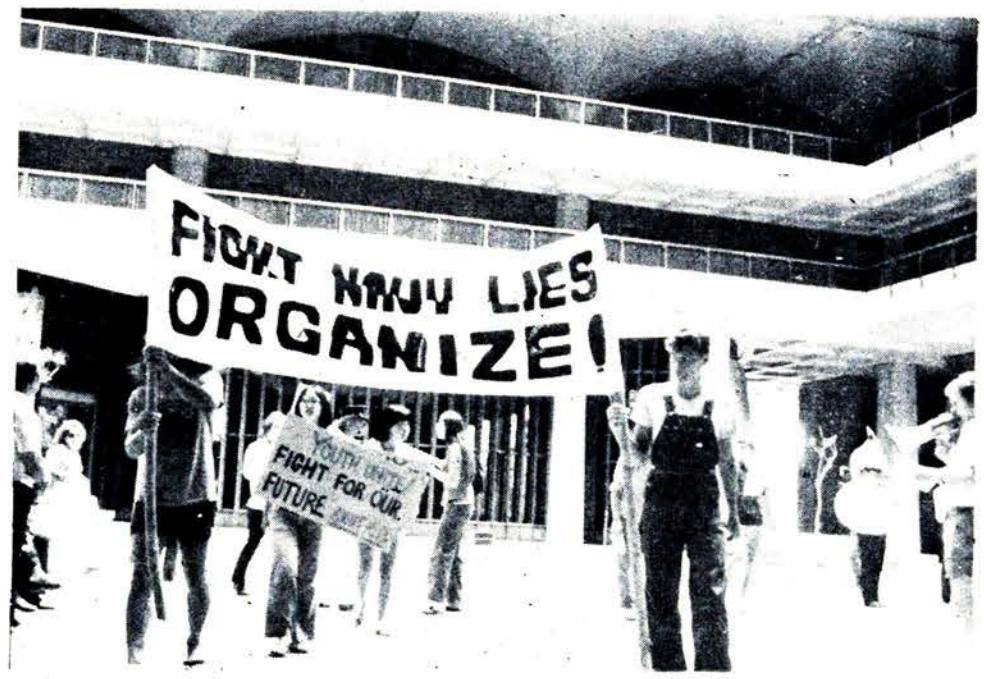
Other good deals include harassment by the brass, a lopsided justice system called the UCMJ, discrimination, lousy living conditions shoved down your throat. The louder they crow about their promises, more and more GIs get angered about these lies.

GIs United in Hawaii is one group of active duty military struggling against the system that wants to use us once and then throw us away. They are united to battle the brass and the ruling bosses of the U.S., fighting for enlisted people's rights. Through the fights they wage, they are exposing the system for what it is.

One recent battle was waged around a brother, concerned for the safety of his men and the crew, who refused an order to work under unsafe conditions. The USS Hassayampa's boilers had been in sad shape for a long time. The leading petty officer (a 1st class boiler technician with 18 years in the Navy) knew they were too dangerous to light off and that extensive repairs were needed before any attempt could be made to light them off. But the commanding officer (who was trying for the luxury life of carrier duty) ordered them lit off anyway. The refusal led to a bust, a fine and a transfer via the brass's own uniform code of military "justice."

GIs united and backed their brother--his fight for safe working conditions was their fight too. They knew that if the brass got away with it this time, in the future they would not hesitate to limp out of port and offer up the lives of the crew so U.S. capitalists could reap the profits of war. Through leaflets and petitions they began drawing more support as GIs realized the brass care only about honors, promotions and rubbing elbows with the rich--not safety. Weakly, the brass tried to retaliate by spreading lies and scaring people with their UCMJ. The brass tried to tell GIs they had no rights and showed how they can bend the UCMJ at their whim to beat down "trouble-makers."

As more and more people supported the struggle, and more enlisted people saw how the "navy takes care of its own," the command had to back down before things really got out of control. Enlisteds won a victory over the brass! They forced the derelicts in command to repair the boilers (a $400,000 job) before going to sea and to reinstate the Boiler Technician as a first class with back pay, and to pull the letter of reprimand from his record! Only one battle in the war for decent working conditions--but this one was won! For sure, more attacks will come down the chain of command, but groups of enlisted joined together fighting these attacks--like GIs United--will bring the brass to their knees and give them and their capitalist bosses a taste of their own dirt. ■



Demonstration near Pearl Harbor in support of the struggle to get the VRB. This Variable Re-enlistment Bonus was the first promised to Navy enlistees; then, after they were in, the Navy reneged. A several year struggle has won back the Bonus.

NEW STUDY
POWs Healthier

Who can forget the lurid tales of torture, isolation and starvation which flashed across America when the POW's were released from North Vietnam. In a simultaneous telecast, former POW's in major cities told how they had been tortured, how they had had bones broken in exactly the same places as they had previous injuries (so not leaving a trace to show any more). Men with pot bellies sat against a wall telling how they had been made to sit like that for days without food. On and on and on they went.

Now, a study by the Navy's Center for Prisoner of War Studies in San Diego has disclosed that Navy pilots who spent time in North Vietnamese prison camps are actually more healthy today than their counterparts who spent the same time eating Navy rations.

John A. Plag, director of the center, reported that his researchers studied 78 POW's and 78 non-POW's and found "pronounced" differences in the physical well-being--and POW's came out better in every major category. Admitting that the findings were "contrary to expectations," Plag said it was probably attributable to the diet plus the exercises that most POW's followed during captivity.

How come the following headline wasn't splashed across TV and every major newspaper--

POW'S COME OFF BETTER IN VIETNAMESE PRISONS THAN MEN ON U.S.NAVY SHIPS!

VA POLICY REVOKED

Sometimes, the Veterans Administration bureaucrats just don't know when they're well off. A V.A. supervisor decided to harass a VVAW member, a member of the Bay Area VVAW chapter and a veteran of the WACs. She had been a member of a VVAW delegation of 10 vets who conferred with the VA Director around benefits for another veteran, and when she went to her work-study job the next day, the harassment began.

VVAW saw this as a direct attack--retaliation for jamming the VA the day before--and went to the Veterans Affairs Office to straighten her supervisor out.

By "personal policy," the supervisor held work-study paychecks for 100 hours even though the contracts stated that vets should be paid after 50 hours. When VVAW jammed the supervisor, he retaliated by firing the ex-WAC.

VVAW made it clear that the chapter was not going to sit by--that VVAW would take him on both around harassment and the firing. And the next day, the supervisor backed down. The VVAW member was re-hired and will be paid after 50 hours. And so will the other vets who work in his department. One more "personal" policy is revoked! ■

FARMERS VOW STRIKE

Over a thousand tractors mass in protest near Plains, Georgia--farmers and their families demand a way out from rising prices while their pay gets lower and lower.

U.S. farmers are on the move. Beginning in Colorado, where banks expect 30% of the state's farms to go bankrupt this year alone, the American Agriculture Movement (AAM) has grown and spread to nearly every state in the union. This movement was highlighted late in November when 20,000 farms and family members demonstrated in Plains, Ga., driving through town on 10,000 tractors. Similar large demonstrations were held the same day in other parts of the country.

The AAM is calling for farmers to strike beginning December 14. Farmers are being called upon not to sell crops already planted or harvested and not to produce any more until they begin getting a better price for their product.

CRISIS IN AGRICULTURE

Farmers, who are small businessmen, are in the midst of a massive crisis. They are caught in a gigantic scissors, with the high costs of machinery, fertilizer, seed, land, etc., forming one blade and low prices (often lower than production costs) farmers receive for their produce forming the other blade. The whole scissors is the monopoly capitalists, with the farm equipment monopolies like John Deere, International Harvester, Allis-Chalmers, big seed and fertilizer companies on the one side and gigantic grain and produce buying conglomerates, like Cargill and Continental, Libby's and Del Monte, along with the large supermarket chains, controlling the market on the other.

And since farmers are small businessmen, they are forced to compete and therefore keep up with developments and advances in agriculture, borrowing capital for expansion. Bankruptcies on farms have been high ever since World War 2, as some farmers couldn't come up with the capital to invest in new and bigger machinery necessary to complete. They went under and their more successful neighbors got bigger, by renting more land - from the banks or famers "lucky" enough to save their land during bankruptcy - and farming larger and larger acreages.

This continuous necessity of expansion also squeezes farmers as the price of new machinery suffers inflation at a higher rate than the goods it helps to grow. As if this was not enough, farmers in most states still face a yearly battle with nature when flood or drought may destroy the better part of a year's work.

While the average family farmer may farm 1000 acres or more, and have over a quarter million dollars worth of machinery, he often lives on less in a year than an auto worker - even when pulling a forty-hour week in some small factory during off-season.

Recently, this squeeze has become sharper. In the Rocky Mountain states, where the AAM first took hold, some one of every four farms is expected to go bankrupt this year. The price of agricultural commodities is not expected to meet both the costs of production or the loan repayment requirements of many farmers.

The AAM is demanding 100% parity, roughly the same situation that existed in 1973. The formula for arriving at parity is complicated but it boils down to this: 100% parity means that the price the farmer receives for his crops equals the cost of production plus a decent standard of living for the farmer and his family. The current parity ratio is 64%. Very simply, farmers want higher prices for their products.

The upsurge of the nation's farmers is to be welcomed. The interests of workers and farmers, in opposition to those who make great wealth off the working people, should be drawn tighter, not divided over who should pay, workers <u>or</u> farmers. The spearhead of the farmers' struggle must be directed especially against the extortion of interest and foreclosures by the banks, against the high prices charged farmers for equipment, as well as against the grain speculators and the food processors. The demand that the government come to the aid of small farmers threatened with bankruptcy should also be supported. <u>Make the monopolies pay</u> must be the watchword during the current crisis in agriculture. ■

Mesabi Miners
2,000 MARCH FOR STRIKE

In the November issue of <u>The Veteran</u> there was an article about the strike of the iron-ore miners in Minnesota and Michigan, particularly talking about how Vietnam vet miners were using some of the lessons they learned from the Vietnam War to struggle against the steel companies.

As of mid December, that strike goes on and is well on the way to being the longest strike in the history of the United Steelworkers Union. An attempt by the companies to divide the miners by offering a settlement which would have included 75% of the miners (and excluded the other 25%) was unanimously rejected by the Iron Range negotiating committee, following a march of 2000 miners and their families in Virginia, Minnesota, the heart of the strike.

Although the strike has been pretty much blacked out of the media, the fact that the companies had to offer to even 75% of the miners a settlement which met their demands, shows that the companies are hurting and that the united power of the miners is beginning to be felt in the pocketbooks of the bosses. ■

Official Policy
Vietnam Vets Not Thrown Away, Here

While Vietnam veterans in the U.S. are under consistent attack by the government, their counterparts in what was North Vietnam benefited from a wholly different type of policy toward veterans. The following official policy was in effect in North Vietnam even while the war was going on.

"Official policy has been established that while waiting for work they will receive the same salary they got in service...suitable jobs are to be reserved for Vietnam veterans ...state agencies must reserve places for wounded veterans... and log jams must be cleared by opening new classes to teach special skills...enterprises set up by veterans are to get extra state aid--and loans at the lowest interest rate (living conditions of families of veterans are to be at least as good as the rest of the population)--dependents are entitled to direct financial aid--and children of dead or wounded veterans are to receive educational privileges and special attention throughout their schooling." ■

Ruling Class Justice: $1 Fine

POLICE MURDER VET

The verdict came in in early October: the cops were acquitted of the murder of a Chicano worker and Vietnam vet and were convicted of a misdemeanor charge of "negligent homicide." In a vicious endorsement of police murder and in utter contempt for the lives of the oppressed, the judge gave the cops a $1 fine and one year's probation.

On May 2, Joe Campos Torres had been arrested in a bar in Houston's East End. The six arresting officers beat him unmercifully. When they arrived at the city jail to book him for disorderly conduct, the cops on duty wouldn't accept him as a prisoner, saying that the arresting officers had to first take him to the country hospital for treatment.

Instead of the hospital, Torres wound up in a secluded area near Buffalo Bayou. The six pigs beat him again. Then one of the badge-bearing bastards, Terry Denso, said, "Let's see if the wetback can swim." The semi-conscious Torres was dumped into the water where he drowned.

There was tremendous outrage in Houston's Chicano community over Joe Torres' murder. Because of this, and with the eyewitness testimony of one of the cops who decided to break the police "code of silence," two of the murderers were brought to trial. Part of the local ruling class' efforts to vindicate the murderers involved moving the trial from Houston to Huntsville, Texas, a small city 70 miles away where the main state penitentiary is located and employs 30% of the city's workforce. In addition, there are almost no Chicanos and few Blacks living in Huntsville.

The outrageous verdict and sentence hit like a bombshell. People were furious. The reaction of the masses of people scared the hell out of the ruling class in Houston.

The struggle to bring the murderers of Joe Torres to justice has been the most significant battle against police brutality and the oppression of minorities to shake Houston in several years. The fury of the people at this and a series of equally barbaric police killings has been organized into powerful action. Shortly after the court rulings, and because they were met with strong, organized and angry demonstrations, the federal government was forced to come out with indictments against the killer cops for violating Joe Torres' "civil rights." It was an important, but by no means final, victory.

Even before the vicious killing of Torres, the Houston police had earned a reputation for brutality and murder. Last year, Milton Glover, a Black vet, was walking through his neighborhood when two policemen called him to their squad car. When Glover instinctively reached for the Bible he always carried in his pocket, the cops shot him dead. Earlier this year a cop emptied two clips of his .45 automatic into a derelict wino he claimed was attacking him with children's scissors! In another incident within the last two years, a young Black man was chased to his home by 20-40 squad cars and two helicopters for exceeding the speed limit. There he was beaten by police in front of his parents, who were pushed around and called "niggers."

Demonstration against Torres murderers in Houston

On the initiative of the Revolutionary Communist Party and the National United Workers Organization, a group was formed, People United to Fight Police Brutality, to provide an organized way for fighters from the Chicano community and other communities to take up the Joe Torres fight and overall police terror.

As the struggle against Torres' murderers exploded, the bosses of Houston tried every tactic they could come up with to dowse the fire. Groups of supposed "leaders" of the Chicano community were pushed to tell people to "calm it." When People United called for a march, even the local priests were used to tell their congregations which groups they should follow. But these tactics failed; People United combatted them at each and every turn. And when the march happened, over 400 people turned out to show their anger.

The big response to calls for mass actions have made it clear that the people are not about to be intimidated or sit back and "have faith" that the courts will set everything straight.

The only reason the federal courts have stepped in is because of the hell raised by angry people in Houston. After so much bitter experience with the "wheels of justice" which crushed Joe Torres to death and vindicated his killers, the masses of people in Houston demanding real justice have not been sidetracked. Seven years ago, the last time the federal courts in Houston indicted a killer cop, he was acquitted after a year's delay. The ruling class and their police would like to repeat this, but their plans could well be upset by the people, organized and united! ■

Mercenaries

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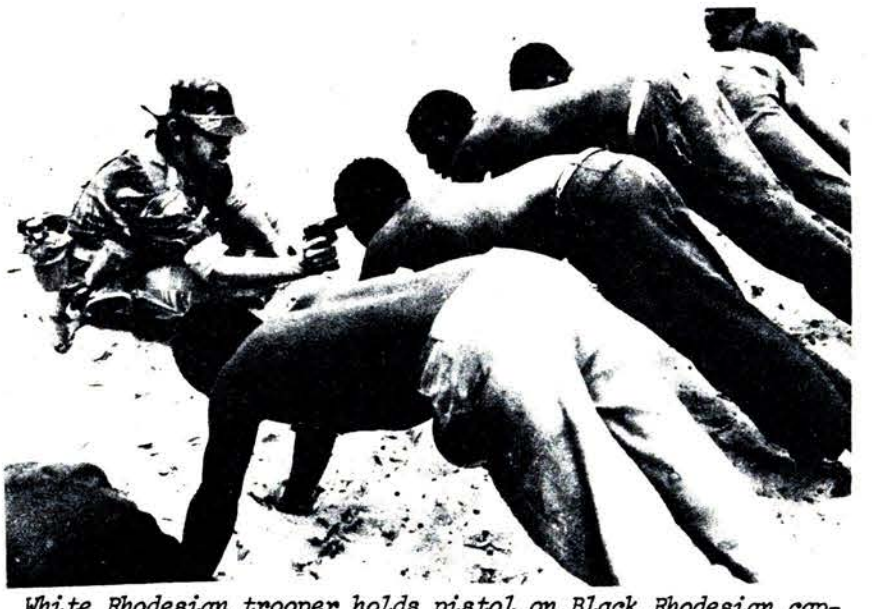
statements about why the U.S. was in Vietnam?

Asked about the atrocities reported in U.S. papers, Nelson said that he had seen victims of atrocities but they were all committed by terrorists. Again that should sound familiar. And finally, Nelson, who was an "armed medic" in the Rhodesian army, said that the U.S. will suffer seriously if insurgent forces capture Rhodesia's chrome and other mineral resources. He may be right--certain big corporations may have problems if the mineral resources return to the people of the country where they rightfully belong. And once again, it's exactly the same justification used by the rich to send us off to Vietnam. The same rich class which beat the drums about patriotism to get us all hot to murder Vietnamese are trying the same shopworn tactic by glorifying these mercenary scum.

To say that most veterans aren't falling for all this crap is an understatement. In fact, VVAW is launching a campaign to equip a company of Black liberation fighters with uniforms and boots by May 1978. We continue to support the efforts of the African Liberation Support Committee including their demonstration in May which will pay a call on "human rights" Carter. As for the bloody terrorist scum of the Rhodesian army, American or otherwise, the people of Zimbabwe will find a suitable reward for them! ■



White Rhodesian trooper holds pistol on Black Rhodesian captives, supposedly "interrogating" prisoners. Despite racist government's claims about their interest in "majority rule," their actions show the nature of the system they have built in the country.

Miners Face Tough Battle

COAL STRIKE A TEST OF STRENGTH

On December 5, 130,000 members of the United Mine Workers walked out of the pits and shafts where they daily mine the coal, and went on strike. Some of the miners from Pennsylvania, Kentucky, West Virginia and Ohio didn't wait for the strike deadline agreed upon by union officials and the coal operators, but instead showed their defiance by walking by the thousands two and three days early.

Labeled as "greedy workers" by the media, the miners are determined to strike for months and face the hardships of a winter without pay in order to win their demands of higher wages to meet the rising cost of living, improved safety conditions in the mines, better benefits, and the right to strike when they can no longer tolerate local conditions.

One group of West Virginia miners in particular, the Miners Right to Strike Committee came under heavy fire recently for their continual battle with union hacks and mine owners. The Right to Strike Committee, a member organization of the National United Workers Organization, have led several successful wildcat strikes, participated in many others, and stood up in support of working people's battles everywhere. The intention of the rich was to douse the flames of struggle by attacking the Right to Strike Committee and all miners. Instead they merely threw more coal on to the fire.

The opening shot in the slander war on the miners came from the mouth of the grandson of John D. Rockefeller, the man responsible for the massacre of miners at the Ludlow strike in 1914. Jay Rockefeller, Governor of West Virginia stated he would call out the National Guard or federal troops to maintain coal production in "his" state. This sent shockwaves of rage throughout the coalfields and across the country. It frightened no one, but added to the miners' determination.

The next attempt to discredit the miners came through the media controlled by the rich. The newspapers, radio and TV said the miners must be "ignorant" and that this strike would be cutting their own throats because all the major coal consumers are stocked for months; besides, 50% of the coal comes from non-union mines. And what about Christmas? The miners don't want to suffer the holidays without money.

The lies about the stockpiling around the country are caving in while the national media maintains "Everything's just fine folks." In Chicago alone U.S.Steel admits they are running low and the strike has just begun. Consolidated Edison, the major power producer for the city admits their "vast stockpile" is only good for 3 or 4 weeks.

The miners say they'll "strike till Hell freezes over." When a CBS reporter asked a young miner about how terrible it will be this Christmas if they remain on strike, the miner responded, "I'm a working man and my son will be a working man. We may not have a good Christmas this year but we're fighting for the Christmases to come--the future.

Even the union hacks, led by UMW President Arnold Miller have stopped their public attacks on the rank-and-file miners and admitted it will be a long strike. Miller publically stated, "I hope for a quick settlement through negotiations" but changed his tune in the face of the miners' fierce determination. Now he says, "We won't be out just this month, but many more to come until we win." He knows full well that if he sold out quickly a majority of miners would wildcat until they won.

Now that the bosses' bubble about stockpiles and non-union coal has burst, the attacks on the miners will just come out in the open and be shown for that they really are: the vicious system of exploitation that bleeds people for profits. The miners are saying flat out--We won't live and work under these conditions

The fight is beyond the question of money. The right to walk when the mine is too dangerous to work. The right to unionize mines as in the 18-month running gun battle in the Stern mine in Kentucky where miners and their wives gain more support and strength when the attacks mount. The right for older and retired miners suffering from black lung disease to have any future at all.

The rich hope to break the back of the miners and set the pace for attacking working peo- everywhere. The example of the miners has in the past and will be in the future an inspiration to working people. The rich haven't stopped their struggle before--and they won't do it now. ■

MINER CUTS RECORD

Bloody Ludlow, Song of Workers' Struggle

AFTER LUDLOW MASSACRE, MINERS, SOME FROM NEARBY STATES, FORMED ARMED SELF-DEFENSE UNITS TO SEEK REVENGE.

Rarely do we get records or any music that accurately reflects the feelings and aspirations of working people in this country. In the field of country & western music we occasionally get a song like "Coal Miner's Daughter" by Loretta Lynn--a proud song. But, at the same time she puts out trash like "They Don't Make Men Like My Daddy Anymore." While coal miners are fighting for a better life, this song puts out a message that in the old days the men worked hard and were happy being poor, and now they want too much.

The capitalists in this country are doing their best to create public opinion against the current miners' strike, even to coming up with a tune "Keep West Virginia Working" for the halftime of the University of West Virginia football game. In the face of this, O.V.Hirsch, a West Virginia coal miner, has written and recorded a new record, "Bloody Ludlow." While the words of most songs ignore people's struggle, "Bloody Ludlow" talks about workers fighting back and winning.

In the last 100 years there have been 10 mine wars where miners have fought for the right to unionize, for better working conditions and decent wages. At Ludlow, Colorado, on Easter Sunday, April 20, 1914, a battle was fought against John D. Rockefeller's goons and his state militia. Miners, their wives and their children were massacred. After the massacre, miners picked up their guns and fought back.

The song is a tribute to these fighters. While Rockefeller owned the mines and land and the state of Colorado, the miners stood up to fight him. Hirsch sings with feeling, anger, determination and optimism and says, "We'll remember Bloody Ludlow as a miners' victory 'cause they fought back."

BLOODY LUDLOW, a 7" 33 1/3 rpm record
O. V. Hirsch, a coal miner.
Flip Side: "Blood on the Tracks" by the Chi-Town Fightin' Machine

Now available from
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"To Hell With Their National Honor, We Won't

VETS BRING NEW ME

Wreath-laying ceremony during Chicago Vets Day

On Veterans Day, 1977, VVAW chapters and vets from coast to coast took a real shot at the band of thugs who run this country--the same bunch that tried to use Veterans Day to push their version of "national honor" and "national pride." Proclaiming "TO HELL WITH THEIR NATIONAL HONOR, WE WON'T BE USED AGAIN," VVAW took the battle around how vets are used--to fight wars for the profits of the rich and now again on days like Vets Day to push for future wars--right into the home park of the class that rules this country.

A couple of major points emerged from the VVAW actions. First, the American Legion, the VFW, and other traditional veterans organizations which faithfully serve the interests of the rich do not speak for "all" veterans as they claim. All their glorification of war, their upside-down concept of "patriotism" just does not get over with large numbers of vets. And despite the attempts of the media in many places to set up a conflict between "older" and "younger" vets, or World War II vets and Vietnam vets, this was not the case either. Vets from all eras marched with VVAW. There is a conflict but it is between veterans who stand with working people, who see how we were used once and thrown away, and vets who support the schemes of the rich to set us up for their next war.

Second, VVAW found that when we run up the banner saying "Fight the Rich, Not Their Wars" people eagerly respond. Not just veterans, though many vets from all wars can appreciate the experience which has led VVAW members to this stand, but non-veterans who are eager to learn from the experience of vets. This response comes from people as different as the chanting highschoolers in San Francisco (see article on Bay Area), to a middle-aged businessman with a briefcase who stopped by the VVAW banner across the street from the American Legion ceremony in Chicago and said "Keep up the good work," to the 70-year-old woman who read a VVAW leaflet in the Cincinnati public library and told members of the chapter, "I'm with you 100%."

The class of people who run this country don't like what's happening--not one bit! And they react in a number of ways which characterize their rule; they try to ignore, harass, intimidate those who stand in battle against them. Because the ruling class owns and controls the media (though not the many sympathetic reporters) they can try to keep information out of their press or gut the political message in the process of covering it. But when thousands of people see a group like VVAW marching in the midst of a Legion parade (as in the Bay Area) the media are forced to cover what went on. Or they can trot out the police arm of their government, whether it's the one-on-one cops at the American Legion ceremony in New York City or the cordon of police giving protection to the Legion in Chicago like any band of hired thugs. When people unite and refuse to be intimidated, and when large numbers of people support what is happening, the rulers can't operate as they might like.

Our theme, "To Hell With Their National Honor, We Won't Be Used Again" says what many people want to say--no matter how many Legion or VFW hacks the rich can display on Veterans Day, we're not about to be duped into another of their wars. Around Panama, particularly, the capitalists try to get out one position (though they try to make it sound like two positions). The flip sides of their coin are the Legion's "Keep 'Our' Canal in Panama" and send off as many troops as neces sary to defend it, or the Carter position which says "Keep 'our' Canal in Panama until the year 2000" and send off as many troops as necessary to defend it with the consent of the Panamanian government. Whether you choose heads or tails, it's still the same bad penny that the rich are trying to pawn off on us, since we're the ones who are supposed to go off and fight their rotten war. What they're looking for is "Heads, they win; tails, we lose." On Veterans Day VVAW countered this confusion with the simple and correct position, U.S. OUT OF PANAMA NOW--Panama belongs to the Panamanians, they sweated and died to build the Canal, and it belongs to them. The U.S. has no more right in Panama than it did in Vietnam. The statement, FIGHT THE RICH, NOT THEIR WARS turns the situation rightside up and points directly at who our enemy is--not the people of Panama or the people of South Africa, or the people of the Soviet Union, for that matter, anymore than our enemy was the people of Indochina.

Hundreds of thousands of Vietnam-era veterans see, from our own experience, how we were once used and then thrown aside with no jobs, bad benefits, stinking hospital care. Treatment of Vietnam vets is a national scandal with the media running consistent stories, President Carter talking about the situation, and even the Legion nodding in the direction of saying there should be jobs for vets. So they come up with a couple of sham programs, they'll talk a lot, and put out movies to show they have sympathy with the Vietnam veterans; but, in the real world, they'll continue to hope that Vietnam vets and the lessons of Vietnam will all somehow disappear. When VVAW took out JOBS OR INCOME NOW, and DECENT BENEFITS FOR ALL VETS during Veterans Day, there was great unity around the demands.

Across the country Veterans Day was a real triumph. Though VVAW held activities in only 8 cities (in addition to those with articles on this page, actions took place in New York City, Cin-

Front of VVAW contingent dur

cinnati, Minneapolis-Saint Paul, Los Angeles and San Diego) we found even more popular support than we had anticipated. This came both from veterans of all eras and from broad numbers of non-vets. In several of the cities (see articles on this page) the ruling class and their stooges like the American Legion were clearly on the run--and running scared. VVAW, with our campaigns for the future, will keep the heat on!

BAY AREA VETS DAY

(The following article was written by members of the Bay Area VVAW Chapter)

Just the other day we talked to a couple of Vietnam combat vets. They were mad because we'd all been through Hell over there for the rich man and now we were getting screwed by the rich man's system. Now, we were about to pass in front of the Reviewing Stand of the Veterans Day parade. We were organized and disciplined, and angry at the way they try to use vets on Veterans Day to glorify war. We carried our banner proclaiming: "To Hell With Their National Honor--We Won't Be Used Again!"

Suddenly the crowd burst into applause, then into cheering! A group of kids raised their fists, chanting: "Hell No, We Won't Go!" A photographer ran to tell us that VVAW was the only contingent in the whole parade the crowd cheered like this for!

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n't Be Used Again!"..VETERANS DAY 1977
MEANING TO OLD DAY !

ngent during Vets Day Parade in San Francisco

tions from VVAW chapters in San Diego and Los Angeles arrived; we put out a call for vets in the Bay Area to assemble at Third and Market (in San Francisco) to join us. As the time approached, vets wearing their old battle fatigues, some with medals and campaign ribbons, at least three World War II vets, Korean War vets and Vietnam vets gathered for a short rally. Then, moving out five abreast, we marched 70 strong to the start of the parade six blocks away. (By the time we were to reach the Reviewing Stand, we would number 100 strong!) We passed by high school drill teams and marching bands, ROTC cadets and the glaring eyes of parade officials.

The parade began. As we rounded the corner on to Market Street, we were determined to tell the world that we veterans will not be used again ! We will not be used to fight another rich man's war, and we certainly won't be used on Veterans Day or any other day to glorify the rich man's blood-soaked rule around the world. That's why they celebrate Veterans Day, and we were there to turn that around. We were there to demand jobs, decent benefits, and that the United States get the Hell out of Panama Now!

And turn it around we did! We were cheered by people all along the parade. More vets joined our ranks. One donated $100 worth of printing to VVAW. We were greeted with clenched fists from passersby. The solidarity we felt with the people was overwhelming.

As we counted cadence and sang out "Fight the Rich and Not Their Wars, It's the Working Class We're Fighting For!," we like we'd never marched before. In the service, marching is one way they keep you in line. Here, marching and being organized made sense--it reflected our determination to turn this "National Honor" crap around. It reflected our determination to fight the rich for what we need!

The crowd knew this and joined us in our demands. We marched by the Reviewing stand victorious! The hacks on the stand (made up of VFW and American Legion leadership, military brass and assorted politicians) announced to us over the PA system, "Alright, you've had your little fun. We've given you more time than any other group. Your time is up, now move on." The crowd booed them down! Someone from the back of our contingent yelled at the officials: "No! Your time is up!" We chanted U.S. out of Panama Now! Fight the Rich and Not Their Wars! We marched on, leaving the parade officials looking pretty damn silly and alone. We had come to "slap the system in the face," and we left stealing the whole show!

The hacks on the Reviewing Stand and the rich class they represent did not want us there on that day. They did everything they could to keep us out. Last year they flat out denied VVAW entrance into the Vets Day parade. This year, we built a whole campaign around Veterans Day. Huge posters and two leaflets went out all over calling on vets from all wars to join us. We held an organizing meeting and and a VVAW Pancake Breakfast. We took a slide show and vets history photo display around to show how vets from the Revolutionary War to the Vietnam War have always come home angry at being used and thrown away by the rich class, and have always organized to fight for what we need! VVAW was on over 14 radio and TV stations in the weeks before Veterans Day. We debated the American Legion and held a number of talk shows ranging from 30 minutes to two hours long. It was the kind of campaign that added up to victory in the "Battle of Veterans Day" in the Bay Area. On the weekend before the parade, almost 50 vets from the West Coast region marched in a demonstration for the International Hotel on the day before the parade. That night, we had a chow mein and fried chicken dinner, then saw the "Battle of the Bicentennial" film.

Our strength was in the thousands of people who knew and supported what we were fighting for. That was the real honor that veterans received this Veterans Day. And like we told the hacks on the Reviewing Stand: Their time is up!

CHICAGO VETS DAY

(The following article is from Chicago VVAW.)

Veterans Day in Chicago actually began with the "federal" Vets Day in October when members of VVAW went to the "Eternal Flame," Chicago's monument to veterans, and burned discharge papers. Because word of our action got out across the city, veterans who had heard about our plans suited up in fatigues and joined in. Challenging a system which would give us a "day" but wouldn't give us jobs, a decent GI Bill, decent healthcare--and one which was gearing up to use us or our sons in another rich man's war--VVAW announced our intention to be part of the city's traditional ceremony on November 11th.

True to our word, we went to the Mayor's office and, after we were turned down there, to the American Legion to demand a part in the traditional ceremony. Standing squarely with the system, they refused; the Legion representative informed VVAW

Chicago VVAW member burns honorable discharge papers during "federal Vets Day" on October 24th. Papers were burned in Chicago's "Eternal Flame," the city's monument to veterans and drew wide support.

members that "You're all dead--you burned your discharges!"

A couple of days later, VVAW was back at the Flame in the midst of Chicago's Loop to hand out bad discharges to the Legion representative, Chicago's mayor and the governor of the state. For the third time the press kept the campaign out in front of the people of the city.

On November 11th none of the advertised dignitaries--the mayor, the governor, the secretary of state--showed up for the Legion's ceremony. And, running scared, the Legion actually moved its ceremony up an hour so that, by the traditional hour of 11 o'clock, VVAW had the entire Plaza area surrounding the "Eternal Flame" for our ceremony. Not only did the city surround the Legion ceremony with a phalanx of cops to protect them, but when one VVAW member tried to unroll our banner with the VVAW demands for the day he was hauled off by 6 undercover cops. When a middle-aged businessman quietly told the cops, "I'm watching; you'll get in trouble," they released him and he returned to our ceremony.

In the face of all these attempts to divert and put off confrontation with VVAW, we didn't slow down for a moment. When 11 o'clock came, we

Continued on page 13

Fight Carter's Unemployment Offensive!

MARCH ON JAN.21

The January 21st March On Washington, to confront Carter's State of the Union with our knowledge of the "State of Things" is being organized by the National United Workers Organization and by the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee. Seeing that vets are especially hard hit by the crisis in unemployment, VVAW is joining in these actions and building to take as many veterans as possible to Washington, DC and San Francisco. The following article is taken from the Unemployed Organizer, national paper of the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee.

If you are tired of pounding the streets looking for work that isn't there, if you're not satisfied with the choice between no work and work with no pay--march with us in Washington. If you are fed up with slave-wage jobs that don't even keep food in your stomach, clothes on your back and a roof overhead--march with us in Washington. If you refuse to be used against the fight of those left on the job and want to unite and fight the real enemy--march with us in Washington. If you are through listening to lies that blame everyone and everything for the crisis we face except the government and profit-starved corporations who are the real cause of our problems--MARCH WITH US IN WASHINGTON ON JANUARY 21st!

We never got out of the last recession and already it's clear that another one's starting. Shutdowns of steel plants in Johnstown and Youngstown. Threats of more in Chicago. Zenith moving 5600 jobs to Taiwan. Tractor plants like John Deere, Allis-Chalmers, and International Harvester laying off around the country and many look permanent.

JOBS. What about President Carter, elected on the promise that jobs "is our #1 priority." What is his "priority?" It hasn't been finding jobs. What's his solution?

Cut unemployment benefits and force people into minimum wage jobs. That's what Carter and Congress have been dishing out and that's what they're planning more of. Many while standing in the unemployment lines bitterly reflect how they voted for Carter thinking things would get better--instead they got worse. Sure, the smiles are still in place, and nothing's gotten better, but it's been nothing but cutthroat attacks since the day Carter took over. Here's the record:

*Carter's unemployment bill, P.L.95-15, cut the maximum number of benefit weeks from 65 to 39. This is passed and already in effect. Now Carter's man in the Labor Department, Ray Marshall, is running around the country talking about cutting benefits back to 16 weeks.

*Carter's "workfare" bill will cut out 700,000 CETA jobs averaging $7800 a year and create 1.4 million workfare minimum wage jobs averaging $4800 a year. Welfare recipients will be forced to take these jobs or get their aid cut off entirely. This bill is now in front of Congress.

*Carter has signed the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill which creates NO jobs, despite all the hot air that came along with it. It's just a vague promise to lower unemployment to 4%, sometime in the next 5 years. After a year in office, Carter has decided--to make another promise!

Carter, Congress and all levels of government are hell-bent on carrying this out, a 1-2 punch of ripping away our unemployment insurance and driving us into slave labor jobs. With no benefits they hope to make sure that the unemployed will have to offer themselves up to starvation wages if we are going to find any work at all. And for those who can't find work, they can die for all these guys care.

We have not forgotten the sharp recession in 1974 when unemployment skyrocketed to 11%. As the corporate giants slowly clawed their way back up, they attempted to do it on our backs--through increased productivity, cutting social services right and left, and using every method possible to use the unemployed as a lever against those left working. Our unemployment insurance was a big thing standing in their way, since it gave us more time to look for a job paying close to the job we were thrown out of, instead of being forced to take the first thing that came along.

Since then unemplyment has dropped, but only to 7%. And the whole thing is blowing wide open again. This time around they want to make sure the unemployed are sufficiently desparate to scab, to take a job at any wage, to go for anything that promises the means to keep body and soul together. To those left on the job they want to be able to use the threat, "there are plenty of guys out there who would love to have your job if you don't like it here."

Carter's attacks are intended to put us all, employed and unemployed, in a position where we are less able to resist their attempts to increase their profits through productivity drives, forced overtime, job eliminations, and a lowering of our living standards generally. Half our class condemned to overwork, the other half to stavation.

These attacks are going on all across the country. A bill in the Washington State legislature calls for all unemployed to be put to work after 15 weeks--for their unemployment checks. In Milwaukee, the County Board is eliminating general relief and forcing recipients to work for $2 an hour or to join a $46 a week school where you "learn to fill out applications."

In the face of Carter's attacks, unemployed and employed workers, veterans, men and women of all nationalities, have started to organize powerful resistance. What we're saying is:

WE DEMAND JOBS
UNION JOBS AT UNION WAGES!
STOP ALL ATTACKS ON OUR
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE!

Continued on next page !!

Letter to THE VETERAN

U.S. Steel Worker's Trip Shows France & Germany Blame Foreign Imports Too

To The Veteran,

I recently returned from a vacation in Europe, through France and Germany. I would like to go over some of my observations as I went through these countries. I am a steelworker, and my plant is being hard hit by the crisis in steel. The companies and the newspapers lay it out very clear for us steelworkers: "The threat is from foreign steel," they say. We all have to pull together so your jobs can be saved. And we have to stop those greedy foreigners, the Germans and Japanese, from overproducing and dumping all their steel on our market. Their motto is "Buy American."

I saw a lot of steel mills especially in Germany. I would drive or ride by some that had as many as 10 blast furnaces. But the funny thing was only 2 were operating. They had modern B.O.P. (Basic Oxygen Process) shops and continuous casters, and they were not operating. I could not figure out how they could be overproducing!

I was in Germany in the Army during 1970-71 and there was no unemployment to speak of then. The big businesses in Germany, including the U.S. Army, imported foreign workers from Turkey, Yugoslavia and Italy. Now there is 4.5% unemployment and also a big campaign against the foreign workers, all about how they "steal" jobs from German workers.

It really hit home when I saw a "buy French" article in France. It was a lesson in how Americans are so stingy and greedy that they will not let the supersonic jet Concorde land in the U.S., and how it is just a scheme of Americans to ruin the French economy. So, as the article states, we must all pull together to save France.

One thing this vacation showed me, besides a good time, was that these "Buy American" and "Buy French" campaigns only try to hide the real cause behind the attacks on our jobs and our living standards.

They try to blame anything but the profit-hungry companies we as well as many foreign workers slave and die for everyday.

The way I see it, it makes more of a difference what class you belong to than what country you live in. And as long as we fight for the working class, we have more in common with our brothers and sisters in any country than we do with any American capitalist.

A well-rested steelworker

Continued from page 10

FIGHT CARTER'S UNEMPLOYMENT OFFENSIVE!

SMASH THE WORKFARE PLAN!

As much as Carter has tried to keep his plans under wraps, they have been slammed in actions across the country in recent months. There have been tent cities of the unemployed in several states. The federal hearing on the workfare proposal have seen demonstrations in 5 cities. Regional actions on September 29th in all sections of the country brought together hundreds. A number of union locals have passed resolutions condemning Carter's attacks.

ON TO WASHINGTON

Make no mistake. The situation is getting worse, and our only way out is to fight them--do all we can to beat back every attack, and prepare ourselves, in our understanding and organized strength, for bigger battles ahead. If we fail to fight now, we'll be that much less prepared for the future.

Now is the time to take the fight to the seat of the government's power--to Washington DC. In January, Carter will be making his State of the Union address. This is the speech every year when the President officially sums up his work in the previous year and his plans for the future. We can already hear Carter's 1978 speech: "Well, this year wasn't quite as good as I had hoped, but things could be worse, you know, after all, and if we all just stick together and have faith in me, next year will surely be better. In 4 or 5 years, we might be able to get it together."

While Carter is smiling in our face and stabbing us in the back, employed and unemployed workers from the Midwest, South and East will be marching in the streets of Washington. Workers from the West Coast will march in San Francisco at the same time. We'll pit our unity and strength directly against the lies and against Carter's attacks on the occasion of his State of the Union speech which will not go unanswered!■

IMPORTS....

Continued from page 1

are at an all time high. In 1975 Zenith made $31 million in profits after taxes; U.S.Steel's earnings are up 4.5%.

What's going on here? Why the layoffs with record profits? Are the Japanese people to blame? Are Korean and Taiwanese workers getting rich because now they have our jobs? Or is all this screaming about imports a coverup to hide the nature of "our" political system?

Contrary to the crying of the owners of these giant companies, imported products are not "glutting the market." Foreign steel averaged about 15% of all steel sold in the U.S. between 1970-74, went below that mark for a couple of years, and may reach 18% this year. Sony, the largest importer of TVs accounted for only 7.5% of the U.S. market.

What is happening worldwide is that the demand for these products is shrinking relative to what it was a few years ago. Fundamentally, this is what happened during the Great Depression of the 1930's. This crisis of overproduction intensifies competition among the company owners, both between and within each country. Buyers of these products naturally buy where they are least expensive and they are least expensive where they are most efficiently produced--with sophisticated machines and fewer workers. In the steel industry the U.S. has built only one new plant since World War II. European and Japanese plants and equipment are brand new since the war. RCA has introduced a new chassis for their color sets which is allowing them to sell for $50-75 below the '76 models. Companies that don't have the new efficient equipment and processes are forced to speed up their workers and lengthen the work day to get more and more out of them. The harassment is just like being back in the military. Work is back-breaking.

The bosses are making money hand over fist. But they are not reinvesting their profits in new machines to stay competitive on the world market. Instead they're investing their capital where it will have the greatest return. If plastics, if nuclear energy, or if investing abroad yields more than steel, then that's where they put their money. Capital chases after the highest rate of profit--that's a law of this system. It happens whether we want to do anything about it or not. So we get tossed out of work and can't find any. Plants close down and run to parts of the country where there are no labor unions, or to foreign countries where the cost of labor power is a fraction of what it is here. Many of us who have been stationed in foreign countries know the poverty that workers there face on a daily basis. In Korea and Iran, where many American companies are building factories, it's a capital offense to organize for collective bargaining. American auto companies like General Motors and Chrysler own big plants in South Africa where the Black workers still have one foot in the slave system.

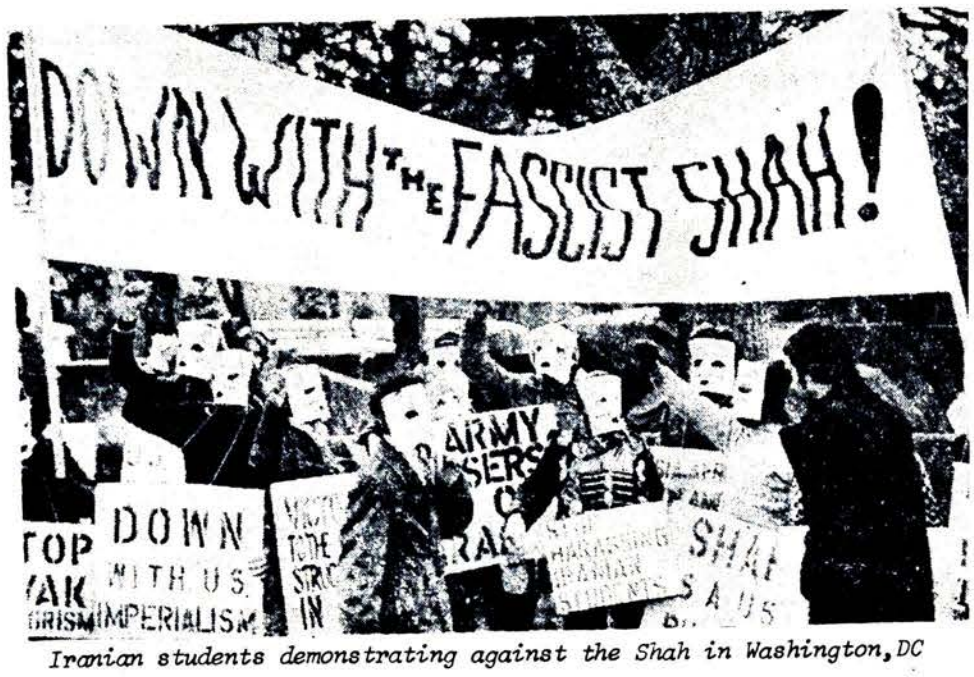
Trapped in an economic crisis of their own making, the capitalist bosses try to put the blame anywhere they can so long as it's not on themselves. What about the jobs for foreign workers? *Are we supposed to* give up our jobs so they can work? Of course not. What the bosses would really like is to force us down to the same level as workers in Taiwan (at 65¢ an hour) or South Korea (25¢ an hour) with unionizing outlawed and benefits non-existent. That would give them the best chance to increase their profits. And workers in other countries aren't going to sit idly by, either--despite the repression of their governments, they too are fighting back (see Iran article on page 12).

Our commanders in government and on the job blame foreign workers for the state of the economy. Their lower echelon officers, the editors and commentators say "Bite the bullet and be ready to fight." Never do they point the finger at themselves and their rich man's system. When we say "Fight the Rich" we mean our only choice is to stand up and aim our blows at the companies who are strangling us right here; get down on who is the real enemy so when the shapers of public opinion say "Stop imports," or "foreign products (and foreign people) are the source of our problems," the American people will say: "No Way! We see through your lies that try to hide the nature of the system. Our fight is right here against you!"■

IN IRAN & AROUND THE WORLD

IRANIANS RISING AGAINST SHAH

On November 15th, official Washington was rocked by demonstrations in protest of the state visit of the Shah of Iran. The evening news showed the Shah and Jimmy Carter and their wives crying from tear gas the police had used on the demonstrators. The demonstration of 6000, consisting mostly of Iranians and led by the Iranian Students Association (ISA), had routed 1500 pro-Shah demonstrators and the police in order to bring to the nation's attention their demand, "Down With the Fascist Shah!" In conjunction with this demonstration at the doors of the White House, massive demonstrations took place in Teheran, Iran, in the face of the Shah's police and laws against demonstrations.



Iranian students demonstrating against the Shah in Washington, DC

The Shah's visit was the culmination of months of backroom political maneuvering on a national and international level. All this scheming was necessary to reconcile Carter's "human *rights" campaign with the Shah's* well-deserved image as a dictator. Jimmy Carter had been elected President and retains what popularity he has left by making promises he doesn't keep and by standing for high ideals that are nothing more than a Madison Avenue, public-relations snowjob. And one of these high ideals is "human rights" which Carter says he supports for the people of the world.

For Jimmy, standing up for human rights is fine in the case of dissidents in the Soviet Union. He wants little from the Soviet Union and can make them look bad in the eyes of the world--a justified image. But with the Shah and Iran it's a different story. Jimmy and the Shah need each other even though the Shah is notorious for his repression of political freedom for the masses of the Iranian people.

Carter and his kind need the Shah for two reasons. First is oil. The rich in this country do not find it profitable for this country to become self-sufficient in energy production. They expect to be importing 60% of the necessary oil from Iran and the Middle East by the 1980's. So, they need the Shah to help hold down the price of oil on the international market.

The second reason Carter needs the Shah is as a military ally. The U.S. and the Soviet Union are contending for world domination and pushing toward a third World War. Iran is located on the southern flank of the Soviet Union and is also an ideal base of operations for control of the Middle East and the Indian Ocean.

The reason that the Shah needs the U.S. is that he needs American arms, advisors (!) and technicians to build a strong military in order to hold down the Iranian people as they rebel against the Shah's repression. The U.S. government's National Security Council estimates that U.S. arms sales to Iran will total $15 billion by 1980 while Carter talks out of the other side of his mouth about the need to reduce arms sales in the interest of world peace. And therein lies Carter's dilemma: human rights vs oil and a military ally. So they called together their little powwow to talk things over and to try to present the Shah as being not so bad as all reports say he is.

Preparations for the Nov. 15th conference had gone on for months trying to show what a kind old soul the Shah is. His wife, Farah Dibah toured the U.S. earlier in the year, receiving humanitarian awards. Ads were placed in newspapers welcoming the Shah--paid for by such outfits as the Atlantic Richfield Oil Co and Chase Manhattan Bank as well as non-existent Iranian organizations created for the purpose. They thought it would be nice to have a pro-Shah demonstration on November 15th so the Shah tried to buy some demonstrators. SAVAK (the Iranian police organization which combination of the FBI, CIA, Gestapo and Mafia thugs), operating freely in the U.S., paid round-trip plane fare, hotel bills, and spending money from $100-600 for Iranians and Assyrians to come to Washington and demonstrate. They were hoping to get 15-20,000 but fell far short, so they bolstered their demonstration with a contingent of SAVAK agents and 700 Iranian soldiers brought in from Texas where they are being trained by the U.S. Army. When the fighting broke out on the 15th, the paid vacationers split, leaving SAVAK and the Iranian Army to fight the Iranian students. All in all it cost the Shah millions of dollars to try to make this rattler look like a simple garden snake.

The effort to paint a rosy picture of the Shah fell flat on its face, because the Shah does not have popular support among the Iranian people. He is, in fact, a fascist dictator. The CBS Evening News on November 15th showed how public television in Iran would portray the Shah's visit. First there would be a film clip of those cheering the Shah, and then the anti-Shah demonstrators would be shown. The announcer then would say that these are "professional demonstrators" being paid $10 to demonstrate. He would tell the Iranian people that these demonstrators were Palestinians, not Iranians, and that they would go and demonstrate anywhere for anything to get paid.

The repression of the Shah goes way beyond just controlling the communications media. Amnesty International estimates that there are over 100,000 political prisoners in Iran and documents the systematic torture of these prisoners. The strike, main tactic of working people for a better life, is outlawed.

Membership in the ISA and other organizations is punishable by a sentence of three to ten years.

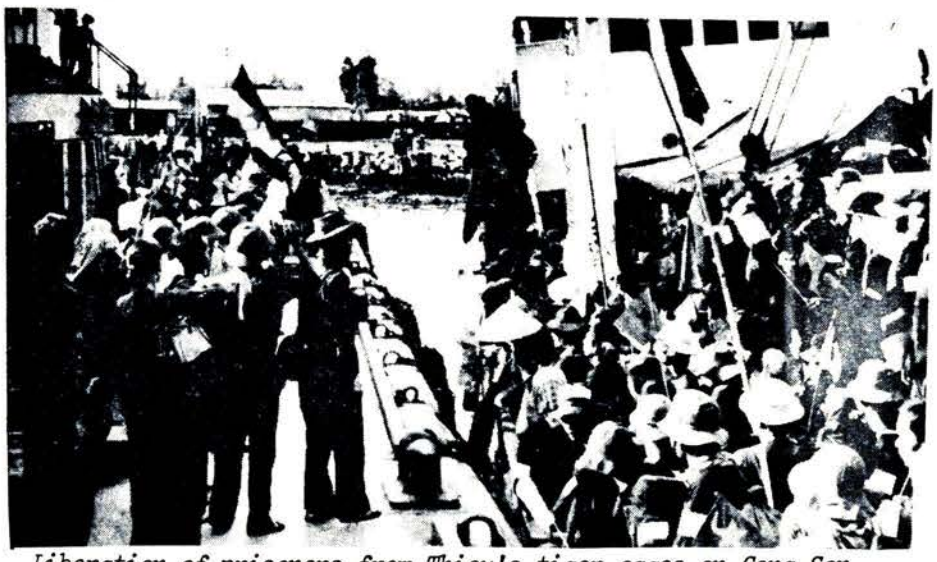
Despite its oil riches, life for most Iranians means total poverty and slavish working conditions. For example, the famous Persian rugs are made by females down to the age of five (smaller hands are better for rug making). Because of the working conditions many girls face blindness and tuberculosis when they become adults. For all this, they get 50 to 75 cents a day.

In the face of no-strike laws, over 60,000 workers in Iran have been out on strike in the last two years. Whenever the Shah goes to another country, Iranians and others led by the ISA are opposing him in demonstrations to expose what he stands for. For instance, after the Shah left Carter, he went to France to work out some deals with French leaders. Thousands of Iranians and French supporters demonstrated against him there.

And in Iran itself there were demonstrations. Ever since the CIA inspired and backed coup installed the Shah in power in 1953, political activity has been repressed and has remained at a low level. However, this time, knowing of the demonstrations in the U.S. and in France, students marched in Teheran shouting "Long Live the Student Movement Inside and Outside of Iran!" The police met this demonstration with force and one student was killed. Next, 10,000 took to the streets and 47 were murdered. Again the next day 10,000 demonstrated and the police killed another 60. The people did not lie down in response to these murders: the main commercial district was shut down, and workers went out on illegal strikes.

In this country the ISA went out broadly to the American people, handing out over a million leaflets and appearing on radio and TV. Despite harassment from the FBI and local police forces in open collaboration with SAVAK, and despite the real danger of deportation to Iran where torture and possibly death awaits, the ISA awakened many Americans to the situation in Iran and received support from the American people. While Carter and his kind are out looking for the best deal, the people of Iran--both in Iran and around the world--are fighting for their freedom against the Shah and his backers.■

"BLOODBATH" IN VIETNAM
AGENT EXPOSES MYTH



Liberation of prisoners from Thieu's tiger cages on Cong Son Island after the liberation of South Vietnam. Cages were built by American corporations and guards trained by the CIA.

When the U.S. military was getting its ass wiped all over Southeast Asia and the opinion of people all over the world was dead-set against U.S. involvement, the U.S. ruling class kept looking for ways to justify their war. One of their public-relations schemes was the statement that if we pulled out, there would be a "bloodbath"--that the Viet Cong would massacre millions of people. Then, when the U.S. was finally forced to withdraw, they still tried to say that the U.S. was right. TV showed miles of film of Vietnamese massing at the U.S. Embassy just before pullout, clinging to helicopter landing gear as the last choppers took off--all in fear of the dreaded Viet Cong.

Stories of the bloodbath were a lie. Films of Vietnamese desperate to leave the country were a deception; the Vietnamese were mainly CIA operatives and rightly feared for their lives as opposed to the rest of the Vietnamese who had nothing to fear. All this has been revealed in a book Decent Interval by Frank Snepp.

Snepp was the top political analyst for the CIA in Vietnam. He wrote this book not because he has suddenly seen the errors of his--and the CIA's--ways and wants to "expose" what was going on; in fact, just the opposite is the case. He brags about the CIA's treacherous activities. His reason for writing the book is to defend the CIA and attack people like Henry Kissinger and Ellsworth Bunker for pulling out too fast and leaving CIA operatives in the lurch. In the course of attacking Kissinger he reveals that (1) the bloodbath was a CIA fabrication with no basis in reality and (2) that those desperate Vietnamese gathered at the Embassy during the final days and clinging to the skids of the helicopters were 400 of Thieu's secret police, 400 agents of Thieu's equivalent of the CIA, 70 CIA translators, hundreds of CIA file clerks and other junior employees, ex-agents, and families of these agents. Of course, their bosses had already slithered out of the country.

So what is happening instead of the "bloodbath"? One answer comes from Dr Hoa Levan, a Chicago professor of radiology, who spent four weeks in Ho Chi Minh City visiting his ailing mother. In an interview published in the Chicago Tribune, Dr Levan, who had freedom to move throughout the unified country, observed "My friends among the Vietnamese refugees told me I would be met immediately at the airport by people who would follow me wherever I went and would eavesdrop on all my conversations. It was not true....I saw no bloodshed. I heard of no bloodbath, mistreatment, or torture."

Dr Levan explained why there are still people fleeing the country; "They were middle class, I suppose, used to a better life economically. Now everyone has to labor."

For the new generation of Vietnamese the new ways are appealing; Levan described how his 10-year-old niece is "so fascinated with the government. She loves it," the Doctor said; "She gets up every morning at 5 o'clock and cleans the house. Then goes out and cleans the street. The streets are spotless. There is no longer trash in the streets."■

VETS....

Continued from page 9

Milwaukee VVAW Chapter at the American Legion ceremony on Vets Day.

stepped off, marching to the "Eternal Flame" and laying a ceremonial wreath (carrying the motto "We Won't Forget, We Won't Forgive") at the Flame to hold a ceremony which actually honored our comrades who had died in the service of the rich. Veterans spoke to how we were used once and then thrown away; they spoke in anger about how we will not forgive the rich who used us--that criminal class which needs wars to increase their rotten profits. A member of Youth in Action talked about how that same class will try to get working class youth to bleed for them in the next war--and how they are determined not to do it.

Then, banners held high and singing to much improved military cadences, the demonstration marched through downtown Chicago. Fists were held high, horns honked, pedestrians hurried over to shake hands with the veterans as the people of Chicago showed that they supported an action which said Fight the Rich, Not Their Wars!

VETERANS DAY IN MILWAUKEE

(The following article comes from Milwaukee VVAW.)

On November 11, the ruling class, represented by their bootlicking servants of the American Legion and VFW thought they would have a relatively clear field to preach "National Honor," to glorify how great an "honor" it is to fight and die for their bloodsoaked rule.

At the Milwaukee War Memorial there are granite slabs with the names of men who died in the nation's wars--World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam. The Legion's great "tribute" to the dead was to consist of unveiling four mosiacs representing the four military services. All in all, it was a disgusting spectacle.

The Milwaukee Chapter of VVAW had built for a contingent to go and make sure there was no "business as usual." On Veterans Day, 1977, their voice was not going to be the only voice of veterans.

On the morning of the 11th VVAW met for breakfast and could see our strength. Among the people there were Vietnam vets of all nationalities, Korean and World War II vets, and a 68 year old widow whose husband had died at the Veterans Administration Hospital.

When the Legion and their cohorts came outside from their indoor program in order to unveil the mosaics, we were there to greet them. Banners proclaimed VVAW's slogans and demands for Veterans Day. Whose interests the Legion serves was graphically shown when a big, pot-bellied jerk wearing an American Legion State Commander's hat pulled out his badge and walkie-talkie and announced that he was a Milwaukee police officer.

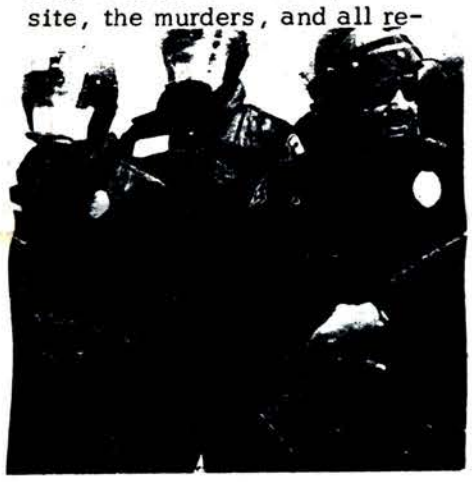
Our response was "So what? We're vets and this is our day." He threatened to call in reinforcements and we chanted, "Fight the Rich, Don't Fight Their Wars!" When the 21-gun salute was fired, we all stood silent, clenched fists raised in angry defiance. Then, one at a time, we threw our medals and discharge papers into the reflecting pool while a local high school band played the "Star Spangled Banner."

It was a day that raised a lot of controversy--and it was a day that made us more determined to fight!■

Kent State 1,500 BATTLE POLICE, HORSES, AND GAS

VVAW contingent leads march during October 22 demonstration at Kent State to protest the plans to build a gym on the site of the murder of four students in 1970.

Officials at Kent State University have planned to build a gym on the site of the murder of four students by the national guard in a protest against the war in 1970. While other sites were equally convenient and even less costly, they wanted to cover up the site, the murders, and all remembrances of people fighting against that war. (See the last issue of The Veteran for details) In response to this there have been a series of protests demanding "Move The Gym."



On Oct. 22, there was another demonstration and protest which met fierce opposition by university and state officials. Court injunctions, newspaper editorials, threats from the university president, arrests of students and hundreds of police couldn't stop the demonstration. The march, with members of Vietnam Vets Against the War in the front dressed in fatigues, marched to the rally point on campus. The police moved in, and the protestors moved off to another part of the campus to finish the rally.

At the conclusion of the rally, the police moved in again, this time on horseback. Students with long poles held off the horses while the demonstration formed up and marched away. The march moved to the gym site, and the police hit with their tear gas, throwing hundreds of cannisters. The demonstration reformed. Students, angered by this attack, were ready to take to the hill which is the gym site.

While more students came out of the dorms to the gym site, the demonstration moved to join them, avoiding the cops as they marched. The new students doubled the size of the demonstration. Some kept the marchers informed of the police movements on the sprawling campus. Others shouted out of their dorm windows, "Pigs off campus.

Two more assaults were made on the hill. Each time the cops let loose with their gas. Students and vets picked up the cannisters and threw them back at the cops until the final retreat. The whole thing lasted about five hours, and when it was over, the cops, the university and the state knew they had been in a battle and knew that if they do build the gym there they'll pay for it. The students and vets came away with a feeling of victory, having learned how to fight and feeling the strength of 1500 people fighting to keep alive the spirit of Kent State and getting ready for the next protest on May 4th, the 8th anniversary of the murder of the four students.■

VETS' NOTES

Continued from page2

veterans no longer have to get two banks to turn down their loan application. In fact, all that was necessary was for the vet to walk into a bank and ask to be turned down for a loan; most banks had form letters already available and only needed a bank officer to sign the letter to fulfill that requirement. While it's good to have one more little harassment removed from educational loans, it's not a major change.

Other changes in the loan program may turn out to be more significant. (Since the new GI Bill is just out, Vets Notes is basing this article on what the Bill says; interpretations of the new Bill will no doubt be coming along from the VA, but at the time of writing this column, the VA representatives don't even know for sure what's in the Bill.) According to the new Bill, loans are now available to veterans who are not enrolled in fulltime programs leading to a degree; such vets need to apply to the nearest VA office. And, even more important to many veterans, vet/students who are enrolled in a fulltime course at the time their ten years runs out (what the VA calls the "delimiting date") can still get loans for the 11th and 12th years after discharge.

Other provisions of the new Bill deal with keeping vets informed. One section, as passed by the Senate, made it mandatory that the vet rep (or VA administrator) inform vets about employment opportunities. As the Bill was finally passed, however, it now says the VA must provide "counselling where appropriate." Similarly, the Senate version of the Bill made it mandatory that advance payment checks include a statement about what period of time the check was for. The final version of the Bill only requires that the VA take "reasonable steps" to get the word out to vets. In fact, in schools with good VA representatives or good vets affairs directors, the word gets out already; it will continue to do so. In places where vets affairs offices don't do anything now, they'll continue to do nothing about letting us know what's happening.

More money is authorized to school for doing the paperwork--$ 7 per vet who doesn't get advance payment, $11 for each vet who does (see what we're worth to the schools?). A provision to give the school $5 for each vet who completes a term was turned down, to be replaced by a "comprehensive longitudinal study" (!!!) about how many vets use the GI Bill; this "study" was given $2,000,000 to work with!

In one final provision, which will probably be given no publicity at all, we veterans now cannot get booted off the Bill without being told about it. The new law requires the VA must have evidence that the vet isn't eligible, must give the vet written notice when he or she is suspended or dropped from the Bill, and has to inform the veterans that he or she has the right to a statement of reasons and an appeal.■

IMPORTANT~ Pensioners

NOTE: A short article, buried under a sweater ad in the Chicago Tribune, says: "Veterans Administration pension benefits will be cut off February 1 for about 700,000 recipients unless they respond to a questionnaire sent to them November 1, the VA said. The questionnaire is designed to determine the outside income that veterans and their dependents receive."

Because we found this item on the same day the paper is being printed, we have not been able to get more information. If you are getting--or should be getting--a VA pension you should get in touch with the nearest VA office. We'll get the necessary information also and include it in the next Vets Notes column.■

LETTERS TO VVAW

THE VETERAN Welcomes letters, comments and criticisms. Also, send poetry, photos, drawings or stories.

Carter's Phoney Amnesty

Dear VVAW,

I am a veteran who spent two years in the Air Force (1970-72) and got an Undesirable Discharge for "Unsuitability." I've just received a discharge upgrade to "General Under Honorable Conditions" and was real happy about that. At least until I read the latest Veteran and found out that these "honorable discharges" that Carter's program "bestowed" on us are phoney! As The Veteran put it, these discharges are not quite "honorable" enough for bennies. Man, was I pissed off to find that out! Who the hell cares about their honorable discharge if we don't get bennies which we need (especially these days) to make it in this stinking rich man's system? As a matter of fact, I was damn proud of my undesirable discharge. I got it because while I was in the Air Force I was going up against the brass and they finally realized I was such a pain in their ass, they kicked me out. And that's what I was bucking for in the first place.

Well, I learned a lot while I was in. And the main thing I learned was that you got to fight back against their oppression and you can't do it alone. There ain't no VVAW chapter in D.C. like there used to be, but I know a couple of vets here. In the interests of getting some of us vets together, to stay in touch with VVAW, etc, I'm asking you to print my name and address along with this letter.

Patrick McCann

554-F Southhampton Drive

Silver Spring,
MD 20903

PS Especially I would like to know what VVAW suggests for helping expose Carter's phoney amnesty and discharge upgrading plan.

BEETLE BAILEY

THE VETERAN
Vietnam Veterans Against the War 25¢

____ ONE YEAR, $5 ____ INSTITUTIONS, $15

SUSTAINERS ____ I would like to become part of the monthly sustainer program. I will contribute $_____ a month. This includes a subscription to the VETERAN.

CONTRIBUTIONS ___ I would like to contribute $_____ to building VVAW and the VETERAN.

Contributions to VVAW are Recognized by the IRS as TAX DEDUCTIBLE!!

Make checks payable to Vietnam Veterans Against the War
Box 20184, Chicago, ILL 60620

"GIs Donation"

(The following letter is from a supporter of VVAW who helped build for--and collect money for--the VVAW action in the Bay Area on Veterans Day.)

To VVAW:

While leafletting for Proposition U (part of the fight around the International Hotel) in San Francisco, I got into a conversation with two servicemen about VVAW's participation in the I-Hotel fight. An Army Sergeant from New Orleans had heard about VVAW from a newspaper article about last year's Bicentennial takeover of the Statue of Liberty and supported the demands that were going to be raised at the Veteran's Day Parade. Unfortunately, he wasn't going to be able to join VVAW in the parade but he donated $5.00 to help build the fight.

Another serviceman, an Air Force captain from Houston, was really interested to know about VVAW. He had heard a free speech message on the radio about calling on all vets to join VVAW on November 6th and was glad to know that there was an organization like VVAW fighting for jobs and income, against GI Benefit cutbacks, and getting the U.S. out of Panama now! He also donated $5 to help build VVAW.

As the word got out about the upcoming Veterans Day Parade and the stand that VVAW was going to be taking up, people at my office got together $10 to give to further the fight.

During the Veterans Day Parade, as VVAW was announced at the Reviewing stand, the audience started to cheer, whistle and raise their fists in support. As the contingent voiced their demands to the rich some of the people I noticed in the crowd joined in with the chants or yelled out "Right On, To Hell With Their National Honor, We Won't Be Used Again!"

The Veterans Day Parade was a major victory in the fight to get decent benefits for all vets, to fight for jobs or income now, and to demand that the U.S. get out of Panama and South Africa right now. But the fight doesn't go on for just one day out of the year--the fight will continue until we win!

"To Hell With Their National Honor--We Won't Be Used Again"

K.K.
San Francisco

Marching To A Different Cadence

The following songs and chants were used around the country on Veterans Day by VVAW chapters, marching to a different cadence!

Oh there they go,
They're at it again,
Preparing for
Their next big war;
They make us fight,
For their rich sums
While people here
Must live in slums.
To honor vets
This day is for,
That's why they cut
Our benefits more.
Oh profit is
Their holy word,
They kill us all
To make some more.
The moral of
The story is:
Let's fight the rich
Don't fight their wars!

(The following chant, based on a military cadence, has a chant leader--what many of us recall as a D.I.--giving the first lines and the people responding.)

It's the same all over the land,
(It's the same all over the land)
Jobs or Income's our demand.
(Jobs or Income's our demand)
(refrain)
Am I right or wrong?
(You're right!)
Are we weak or strong?
(We're strong!)
Are we movin' on?
(Right on!)
Keep on keepin' on.
(Keep on!)
Unemployment, it ain't funny,
We need jobs and we need money.
(refrain)
Vets are mad, we've had our fill,
Extend and expand the GI Bill.
(refrain)
We won't fight more rich man's war,
It's the working class we're fighting for.
(refrain)
We're madder than hell, we're building our fight.
Vets and workers will unite.
(refrain)
Listen to this, it ain't funny,
We do the work and the rich get the money.
(refrain)

Recollections From Vietnam

"OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE...." — IT'S THE YOUNG ONES WHO DO !

The episode printed here is only one example of the kinds of experiences that vets had in Vietnam. Vietnam Veterans Against the War hopes to print a book of such recollections, whether from Vietnam, from basic training, from being stationed in Korea or anywhere else around the world--actual happenings as remembered by the vets who saw them or lived them. Given the flood of publications and movies about the Indochina War, we see the need to have material which goes beyond the idea that the war was a "terrible mistake." We invite veterans to think back over their collection of "war stories," write them down and send them in. The exact nature of the final book will depend on the contributions we get, but we believe it can be a powerful statement of some of the experiences which helped us come to realize why we should "Fight the Rich, Not their Wars."

Tet, 1968, broke across Vietnam like a thunderbolt. The Viet Cong and NVA launched a major offensive that liberated major cities, claimed a major portion of the countryside, and sent American and allied troops reeling. It wasn't as if we did not know it was going to happen. In early December, our battalion had launched an offensive of its own in the jungles west of Tam Ky. On the operation we killed the Intelligence section of the 2nd NVA Division and captured intact the plans for the Tet Offensive including overlays. It was an incredible coup that enabled us to bomb supply routes, station troops at strategic locations and build up our defenses.

Despite this advance knowledge and the fact that the Vietnamese attacked where the plans said they would, we were beaten back. 285,000 troops from the National Liberation Front broke the myth of American invincibility as half a million American, one and a half Saigon, and 100,000 Korean, Australian and Taiwanese troops were battered from one end of Vietnam to the other. My unit, the 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Brigade was put under command of the Marines outside of Da Nang. We, like others at Hue, Saigon and the Delta all felt the wrath of those fighting against the foreign invader and his mercenaries.

Our unit, the 196th, was developed especially for Vietnam. It was logistically self-sufficient so that we could be moved from one area to another without putting a strain on the unit we were being controlled by. This meant moving from one hot spot to another. We also lost a lot of our own men due to stupidity, incompetence and glory-hogging officers. And all this led to our becoming know as the 196th Light Suicide Brigade.

When Tet came we were sent to plug up a hole. Our whole battalion moved out on line early in the morning. We were looking for the Vietnamese before they could reach Da Nang proper. We found them--or they found us--as we reached the halfway mark of an open rice paddy area about 100 yards wide.

American GIs set up machinegun position at the edge of rice paddy in the northern (I Corps) section of South Vietnam. This is the kind of open territory that the Brigade Commander wanted the Battalion in the article to charge through.

A whole company of hardcore VC opened up; re-enforced by a rocket platoon they rained hell on the battalion from a dug-in position slightly rising out of the paddies. Most of the battallion fell back, leaving seriously wounded and dead alike. A small detachment made it to the VC trench but were cut to pieces.

The entire staff was assembled in the TOC (Tactical Operations Center), getting support from gunship assaults (helicopters), air support (Phantom jets) and artillery. The battalion commander issued orders trying to see if the line of Vietnamese could be breached or cracked. As the day wore on, 5 artillery batteries came in for support, gunships sprayed the area with rockets and machine gun fire, and 3 flights of Phantoms dropped fire and bombs on the guerillas. The Vietnamese held. We took more casualties. Men died, equipment was destroyed. Despite our numbers, our superior firepower and equipment, they would not move.

We could not understand it. There was no doubt in our minds that under similar circumstances we would have fallen back. As a matter of fact that was always a topic of conversation after an air strike--What the hell would we do if instead of F-14's, MIG's came screaming down? How would we get out? But then again we all kept short-timer calendars (marking off our 365 days in country) while the Vietnamese could not stop until they had kicked the foreigners and their mercenary armies out.

After 6 hours of intense fighting, we were losing, a fact taken in by the battalion commander, a West Point colonel. All of a sudden he decided he must talk to brigade headquarters and left. Next, the battalion executive officer, a West Point major, left "to see the Colonel." He was followed by the Bn Operations officer, also a West Point major, who had to "check personally with Bde operations." This left the supply officer, a West Point captain, and myself, a 20-year-old very junior 1st Lieutenant, who was acting intelligence officer and had only recently been pulled in from the field. Soon, the captain left to "arrange supplies." Here in the midst of the heaviest fighting of the war were an OCS junior-grade officer and assorted enlisted RTO's left to direct the battalion. It wasn't hard for us to grasp what was happening. The lifers sensed a defeat and like rats scurrying off a sinking ship, were looking to be out of the area when it happened. The lives of the men didn't matter, only finding a scapegoat and protecting that next promotion.

The battle continued. We took more casualties. The men who had been wounded and caught in the rice paddies were screaming, trapped between the crossfire of American and Vietnamese troops. It was only a matter of time until they were hit again or bled to death. The American troops who had made it back were cursing or crying. There was nothing they could do. To venture out into the open paddy was certain death.

Above all of this flew the Brigade Commander in his helicopter. He must have just seen the "Green Berets" because he came up with a plan which could have worked only in Hollywood. "Crawl on your bellies across the rice paddy until you reach the enemy, throw hand grenades and then run back!" It was suicide and the men refused to move. "Move out! Crawl, crawl!!" The men stayed put. "You are all cowards!" The men began to curse, not the Vietnamese but that fool colonel flying over them screaming into the radio. The colonel gave up his scheme but not before he had himself put in for the Silver Star for bravery for flying over the battlefield. And the men on the ground, fighting and dying in the mud? They got nothing. After all, they were "cowards." The fighting continued into the night. Under the cover of darkness the Vietnamese pulled out, taking their dead and wounded with them.

The next morning the battalion moved over the area, the battalion staff returned and the Brigade Commander's Silver Star was announced to his hometown papers before it even had time to clear channels.

My Mother mailed me a newspaper clipping; it seems my unit had won a great victory outside of Da Nang with many enemy killed and few American casualties.■